George Washington University
Institute for Ethnographic Research

A Thai Teacher-Businessman in Bangkok: A Case Study
Author(s): Milton Jacobs
Source: *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Oct., 1963), pp. 203-217
Published by: George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3316965
Accessed: 13-11-2015 00:41 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Anthropological Quarterly*.

http://www.jstor.org

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

A THAI TEACHER-BUSINESSMAN IN BANGKOK

A Case Study

MILTON JACOBS
American University

The following is a verbatim recording of an interview with a Thai male teacher of English in Bangkok to whom I have given the fictitious name Daeng. The value of this interview is that it quickly exposes many of the attitudes and values of the Thai and illustrates some of the stresses and strains that occur in the transitional cultural climate of Bangkok.

My approach was to ask the informant to tell the story of his life in his own words. No structured questionnaire was used. When the informant expressed himself unclearly or ambiguously, I would then interject a probe that called for clarification or elaboration. I have made no attempt to analyze the nuances of Daeng's Thai English since I make no claim to have expertise in this area. I leave such fine analysis to those who have spent longer periods among the Thai than I have. In my analysis, however, I will accept Daeng's expressions of approval and disapproval since in all cases he volunteered his remarks without any influence on my part. Mainly, these are his spontaneous remarks ordered as the informant saw fit.

> "I was born in a village about 400 kilometers from Bangkok. I lived there until I was nine years old. My uncle who was a lawyer brought me to Korat. In Korat I began my education and finished secondary school education there. My father died when I lived in Korat in the second year. After that I went to Ubol in the northeast of Thailand. I lived there for two years and finished pre-university of Thamasart University. This was at the end of the second World War. I had met many allied soldiers. I had a good time with them. I had many Dutch friends, American friends, and British friends. When the war was over, I came down to Bangkok to look for a job but there was no job for me. The life in Bangkok was very hard. I had no place to go. I had been hunting for a job for several months. So I went to the temple in Thonburi.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

"I lived in the temple for eight months. Then I went up to my village and worked as a salesman in a cloth store (also sold agricultural products, cowhide, kapok in this store). My uncle . . . my grandfather was the elder brother of my uncle's father . . . owned the store. I lived there one year. He promised me he would give me two rooms to live in and to run a business. I didn't have any salary when I was working with him. I ate at his house, I lived in his house.[1]

"He was an agent . . . he sent shellac to Indians (cloth weavers) from whom he obtained cloth. He also sold shellac, jute, kapok, etc., and also sold tamarind (used in making beer). The villagers brought material to him. He would pay them in money. Villagers would then buy cloth from his store. They borrowed money from him. The store was in Bonpai Station. Villagers would come from another province by bus or truck. He (my uncle) was well known in business. He is a clever man and very rich. Nearly sixty years old. He also buys paddies (fields for rice). Both men and women would come to do business with him and sometimes they would stay for one or two days. He has living quarters for customers. Free. The customers would follow seasons of products in going to Bonpai. He would take chances in business unlike others in business. I admire him very much; he is clever. I like him very much, but he has not been kind to me—but he taught the moral. He did not give me any money. He wants to fight with Chinese traders in Thailand. He is a Thai or Lao. He understands the economic situation in Thailand; most of it in the hands of Chinese people.[2] He has his workers, customers, and villagers who come to him. He jokes with them; tells them stories. He teaches them to be clever in business; he tells them stories of the rich people of the world. They believe his stories because he has a strong personality and because he is successful in business. He is a religious man, spends money having stat-

[1] The Thai social system is one which maximizes dependence and friendly, though certainly not intimate, relations, while it minimizes the hostile and prematurely independent relationships (Hanks and Phillips, 1961, p. 655).

[2] Chinese are considered the Jews of the Far East, untrustworthy, and deceptive. They are also resented by the Thai since they control so much of the economy (Skinner, 1957, pp. 164-165).

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

utes built for the wat.[3] He thought that I was a weak man in business, like a man who wanted to walk on the smooth road. After a year, I wanted to visit my mother and I asked my uncle for some money to give to my mother who lived about 50 miles from Bonpai. He just gave me money for the bus fare. I just kept quiet. I stayed with my mother for one night and decided to leave him in 3 days. My mother and brother supported themselves by growing cotton, sold material that is made into shellac, raised silk. She was the head of the family so she was in charge of this business. I have 3 sisters and their husbands do the same thing. They added to my mother's business.

"I didn't tell my mother that I was going to leave my uncle. He tried to stop me and he taught me some mottoes . . . 'There are obstacles in life before life is smooth. All men must fight in his long life before they live in a good place. Men who never walk on muddy road are not good men.' I listened to him very carefully. I said that I was not happy in my life at that time. He brought an old man to teach me something in order to stop me from going away. The old man told me many things. He said that my uncle was a man of great wisdom; I should stay with him to help him. But I said that I had decided to leave. I had gone to school, I had been educated, I had known many foreigners during the war, I had been to Korat and Bangkok, I had read many books. I felt that I should work more with my head than with my energy. My uncle wanted me to work with energy and with wisdom. He wanted to stimulate me in learning Chinese . . . because the big traders are Chinese. When we can speak Chinese, we can get into real business . . . important business. We will know better than when we speak Thai. It is a fact. If we can speak Chinese when we go to a Chinese shop, we can buy things cheaper. I didn't know what to say. I said goodbye to him and he gave me 420 baht (Thai currency, one baht equals the value of about 5 cents U. S.). I did not understand why he gave me that amount.

[3] Making merit is expected behavior of the good Buddhist. Having statues built for the wat, giving food to monks, providing money or food for religious celebrations are all part of merit making.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

"I came to Bangkok with that money; came 3rd class; I had about 300 baht with me when I reached Bangkok. I happen to meet a man whom I had met in Ubol. He took me to see his sister who was an agent of the government lottery. They asked me to sell lottery tickets. For one year, I had been doing that business with her. On an average day I earned 25 baht; on a good day I earned about 50 baht. It was enough to live on. I lived with them. He was a good friend to me in Ubol and in Bangkok, too. He was a naughty man. He just completed grade 8. He was the youngest of the family so his parents spoiled him very much. His mother forced him to marry a girl who was his relative —his cousin. His parents were rich at that time and they wanted to maintain the wealth of the family through marriage. I was living with his sister and his mother. When he got married, he was sent to another province to be a sub-agent. He and his wife opened a shop in Lopburi. He was in the lottery business too.

"I did not like this kind of work but I worked hard, did it with my heart,[4] and sold more than the others. I was looked down on by my friends from school, my teachers . . . they turned their faces away from me. They felt very sorry for me. They wouldn't talk to me. (He had been planning to finish law or prepare to work in the Interior Ministry.) Two months after my friend went to Lopburi, he was killed by hooligans who tried to rob him.

"After he died, I decided to change my life. I happened to go to Donmuang Airport. I saw a clerk of Stan-Vac Co. When he talked to flight engineers and the captain of the plane, he gave me the greatest impression in my life. He talked fluent English. The pilots of the plane walked so smartly; also that man walked smartly too. I decided that one day I must do that kind of work. I went to him and asked him, 'Where did you learn your English?' He said, 'I learned at Thamasart University.' I asked him about his work, about his income. He told me that it was very hard work . . . but it had a good income . . . at that time he was

[4] I asked a young Thai girl, a graduate student at Georgetown University, about the meaning of "I did it with my heart." She said that it means that Daeng did it seriously, not half-heartedly.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

making 750 baht a month. That salary at that time was higher than an official of the government. Back in Bangkok, one full moon night, I walked from my home to Stan-Vac to see how big the company is. I went there with some friends and I told them I must get this job within six months. No one believed me. Because I didn't speak English well, they said that I did not have any knowledge to work in the foreign companies. I decided to study English. I was still selling lottery (tickets). Then I met British missionaries who fled for their lives from Communist China; they asked me to join their choir . . . on the street. Preaching, singing, and selling books on street. I was welcomed warmly by those people. Every evening when I was free, I went to their home . . . talking English. At that time, I began to teach them to speak Thai. At the same time I learned to speak English from them. My English was much improved in 3 months. I began to read the English newspaper . . . 3 months later, I was sure that I would pass the interviewing examinations. I had a great dream to get a job. I went to many missionaries. Then, a man at the airport told my teacher (a Thai who worked with KLM) there was a vacancy at the airport. This teacher came to me. He knew that I wanted a job at the airport. Anyhow, he was not sure that I had good English, or could understand English. He asked me to bring him to see the missionaries. I did so. When he heard our conversation, he thought that I could work at the airport. He made an appointment for me to take the examinations. I passed the examinations and had 2nd rank out of 6 people. I thought that I could get a job. From the airport, I was sent to see the employee manager and was interviewed. He said that he would like me very much. I waited for a job for one week, but no news came so I went by myself to see the employee manager and wrote him a long letter to share his sympathy on me.[5] He said that I could not be helped because the company only wants men who know many languages. I was told to wait. So, I felt very badly in my life.

[5] This means that Daeng desired the sympathy of the employee manager and that he wanted an opportunity to plead his case.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

"I went to one missionary (Finnish missionary who had his own church) who lived upcountry and he said that he wanted me to be his Thai teacher. I decided to go with him to Lomsak . . . Petburi province. He wanted me to translate his sermons, his speeches. I decided to settle down in Lomsak. There are big fields and forests there, things are cheap, many beautiful mountains, the soil is so rich. I decided to raise chickens because I taught only two hours a day, 5 days a week. I got 350 baht per month from the missionary for my teaching. I had enough money to build up a chicken house . . . by using bamboos. I met a girl . . . she was very nice to me. She owned the house where I lived. She charged me 150 baht for room and food. And she encouraged me to do business in the upcountry. I liked the life in the upcountry very much. I was very happy for a few months. Then I got a telegram from the Stan-Vac Co. to come back to work in Bangkok. Incidentally, that missionary came to Bangkok to see his friend off who was leaving for Europe. So I talked to him about it (Stan-Vac job). It was according to me whether I would stay with him or go to Stan-Vac. I came to Bangkok with him. I had mixed feelings about taking the job. I just wanted to see if the company would accept me or not. The company said that they wanted me to work with them. I decided to work with Stan-Vac. I didn't tell her (girl upcountry) that I was leaving. I was very much in love with her. She was charming, kind, clever, not well educated . . . but not so pretty.

"The company sent me to see the doctor to have a physical examination. I was sent to work immediately. When I began my first day there, I was disappointed because all supervisors (Thai) acted so proudly in the office. (Thai who work for foreign firms feel that they have arrived; they are quite arrogant with newcomers on the job and have no patience with a person who is just learning.) I was ready to leave work on my first day. I told the superintendent that I was going to resign because no one shared their mercy with me. My boss said, 'The first man lost a job because of lacking patience but you are a man and are honored

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

by the company. You must do it. I will teach you. If you die, I will bury you. A man must fight and must not say that he cannot do, without trying.'[6] He gave me a motto: The value of the man is like the value of the country that he lives on. Only man can be a king, (or a) statesman, and the strongest man can win. If we are defeated, we don't have any value. No one will praise or respect us. Please set up your price as big as the land.

"Another man, a Thai (and former) teacher told me about hara-kiri, and about kamikaze planes.[7] He wanted me to make myself strong. Hardworking, clever people, who learn things with their hearts . . . (like the) Japanese. He gave this as an example in history. He gave me much confidence. He is still my friend. I don't see him often . . . not at all since I left. He was sent upcountry by the company. I still have feeling of respect and appreciate his strength and the many things he taught me."

* * * *

Daeng remained with the oil company for 8 years. On the positive side, his command of English reached conversational fluency although his writing is painful and ungrammatical. The pressures of the job were so great that his physician insisted that he give it up after Daeng developed a severe case of ulcers. It was then that Daeng established his English school where he could earn a good income "using his head." At the present time, the enrollment has climbed to about 300 students and brings him as profit the equivalent of $300 (U. S. value) per month.

Daeng is now 35 years old, the father of two young boys and is married to a very energetic and enterprising woman. His time is taken up with his school, teaching classes, supervising junior teachers, and with a host of public relations and advertising activities that he thinks are necessary ingredients for success of his venture. I gather that most of his waking hours are filled with work and there is little time for leisure or play.

* * * *

[6] Daeng's boss was attempting to tell him that he should not be afraid of failing.

[7] This is an example of men dying for their convictions or goals.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

Analysis

Daeng's Ambitions

In his early life, Daeng espoused, perhaps partly influenced by his lawyer uncle, the aspirations of many Thai—that of becoming a government official. However, being unable to graduate from university, he was cut off from this traditional avenue of success in Thailand. According to an American informant who has had decades of close contacts with Thai university students, the motivation of the Thai who attends university and works for a degree generally focuses on the government career that is his reward for his work and years of study. He further reported to me that Thai university students identify with the king and the nobility and therefore derive a special status from their university affiliation.

His first ambition having been frustrated, Daeng spent an unhappy year living with and working for an uncle upcountry. Leaving his merchant uncle's employ and home, he explains that he preferred to work with his head (intellectually) rather than with his energy (physically). After all, he told his uncle, he was an educated person who had known many foreigners and had visited Korat and Bangkok. How could his uncle expect him to remain in a small place like Bonpai Station?[8] After his failures to find success through the university, the government appointment and in the business venture with his uncle, Daeng sought the prestige of employment with a foreign firm in Bangkok and by living in Bangkok. His school, which he established after an 8-year stint with Stan-Vac, prepares young Thai and Thai Chinese for positions with foreign firms and provides for Daeng a good living but also is a source of multi-dimensional status—as a teacher, as a successful businessman, as one who is in contact with the Bangkok foreign community, and as a resident of Bangkok.

Attitudes About Kin

What can we learn of attitudes about kin from Daeng's interview material? I have already mentioned Daeng's lawyer uncle

[8] Hanks and Phillips, 1961, p. 650. When their informant, Dang, returned to his village from Bangkok, he had a sense of failure, had lost status, and had lowered his standard of living to the level of a countryman. Having lived in Bangkok and having known westerners are prestigeful to the Thai.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

who sent him to school in Korat. Although Daeng does not explicitly say so, it seems probable that he was financially dependent upon that uncle. However, his inability to attend university seems to indicate that this uncle would not assume the continuing financial burden of sending Daeng to university. Daeng does not give us any indication of his feelings toward his uncle.

Daeng mentions his mother and three sisters in a most matter-of-fact way. He wanted to visit his mother at the time that he had decided to leave his merchant uncle. Although in the middle of a crisis and a major decision, Daeng remained with his mother for one night. He fails to refer to his mother and sisters again in his interview.

His younger brother lives with Daeng, Daeng's wife and children and teaches in Daeng's school. There seems to be a close relationship between Daeng and his brother; Daeng acts as his brother's advice-giver, confidante, as well as his employer. Although there are no references to this in the interview material, in conversations with Daeng, I gathered that he is the head of his family and that he assumes a supraordinate position over his younger brother.[9] The family atmosphere appears calm and unified and bears out the conclusion by Hanks and Phillips that among the Thai group coherence depends on status inequality.[10]

Again, I must refer to non-interview material in order to describe Daeng's attitudes and feelings about his wife. His casual remarks have been complimentary in that his wife's drive and business acumen please Daeng. He never used descriptive adjectives of any kind to describe his wife's appearance, her abilities as a homekeeper or her abilities as a mother. There are two preschool sons whom I have seen in Daeng's home and who appear to be healthy and well taken care of. At no time, during our many discussions or during Daeng's recital of his life story did he discuss his sons except to mention that he had them. Of all his kin, Daeng spent most time talking about this merchant uncle in Bonpai Station. Here, I find strong ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, Daeng expresses admiration for his uncle's business skills, strength of character and purpose, and on the other he

[9] It is usual to seek the advice of older members of the household and to follow that advice. Power in the kinship group resides with the oldest and richest member (Thamavit and Golden, 1954, pp. 381-89).

[10] Hanks and Phillips, p. 642.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

expresses resentment and animosity toward his uncle. Daeng's uncle[11] had promised that he would set him up in business and would provide a house for him. After waiting for a year, Daeng refused to postpone the day of his independence any longer and when his uncle's promises were not forthcoming, he summarily left in spite of his uncle's attempts to dissuade him.[12] On taking leave, Daeng said that he didn't know what to say to his uncle or to the old man whom his uncle had recruited to persuade him to remain with his uncle. Similarly, Daeng did not tell his mother that he planned to leave his uncle's home and employ. These episodes seem to represent the typical Thai behavior of avoiding face-to-face conflict or unpleasantness.[13] The uncle in turn by sending someone else to plead his case also avoided unpleasantness and conflict.

Attitudes About Friends

"My experiences have told me not to depend on friendship . . . at least not too much," Daeng volunteered in his interview. His feeling about friendship is not atypical in the Thai culture. Daeng's oldest friend in Bangkok was considered a reliable friend because he never asked Daeng for money. "Good friends should never talk about money." In line with the relationship of friends and money, our informant recounts a long unhappy history of lending money to friends who then departed and broke up the friendship. Daeng's experiences ring true and resemble the statement about the evanescence of Thai friendship made by Hanks and Phillips.[14]

"A wealthy young man can build a following of chance acquaintances though let there be a single season when his income decreases, then his faithful friends of many an evening's sociable drinking vanish."

[11] Daeng was part of his uncle's cluster of cooperating kin. This fits in with the Hanks and Phillips discussion of status inequality as being characteristic of the Thai family (p. 642).

[12] Hanks and Phillips (p. 654) describe the Thai system of affiliation where the kinsman who grants favors in return for obedient service encourages dependence and postpones the urge for independence.

[13] Hanks and Phillips discuss the Thai fear of expressing hostility. Their informant, Dang, usually remained silent with his superiors rather than presenting his viewpoint to them (p. 638).

[14] Hanks and Phillips, p. 642.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

In the matter of Daeng's lending money and his inability to recoup the loans, our informant may well have become a dupe to these friends[15] who accepted his money and then disappeared.

Recall Daeng's friend who sold lottery tickets in Bangkok. "He was a good friend to me in Ubol and Bangkok. He was a naughty man." There are two points of interest in his simple declaration. First, since Daeng knew this man in Ubol and since they were both Northeasterners, Daeng's behavior in searching out an old friend and a fellow Northeasterner is a pattern that Textor reports in his study of pedicab drivers in Bangkok from the Northeast: Northeasterners when they first migrate to Bangkok search out kin or old friends from their native areas to gain emotional support.[16] Second, this friend, according to Daeng, was a naughty man. Is this Daeng's way of expressing his admiration for his friend's "cool heart"?[17] Or a good and naughty man may be interpreted to mean that although this friend committed acts which Daeng labeled naughty, his good relationship to Daeng cancelled out the negativeness of his naughtiness.

Again, a great deal may be inferred from Daeng's words about his missionary friends. Assuming that his early days in Bangkok were most difficult, Daeng probably sought out a new dependency relationship for himself. The missionaries may well have been those with the higher status giving succor, support, and guidance to Daeng.

From his interview data and from less formal conversations with Daeng, I judge that he is a man who is alone much of the time. He talks about good friends but he sees them rarely. However, from the conclusions reached by other students of Thai culture, this state of being alone, of being dependent on one's own resources does not seem to be inconsistent with what one expects or with the way one lives his adult life. Hanks and Phillips write that the Thai personality is more encapsulated, alone, and isolated than the Chinese personality.[18] Ruth Benedict, in her early study

[15] ". . . when a good end is in view, it is praiseworthy to use deceit and guile." (Benedict, 1943, p. 39)

[16] Textor, 1961, p. 21.

[17] Embree, 1950, p. 187. A good liar requires cool temperament—called Choei—to which the Thai accord considerable respect.

[18] Hanks and Phillips, 1961, p. 655.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

of Thai culture speaks of self-reliance as being a desirable state for which the Thai strive and finds evidence for this striving for independence in the Buddhist teaching and in the self-reliance that is inculcated in the early learning of motor skills among the Thai children.[19]

Daeng's Political Attitudes and His Role as a Communicator

What light does Daeng shed on the Thai as a citizen and politico? Embree claims that the Thai are apolitical.[20] My American informant is positive in his assertion that the Thai university students are apolitical. Even in the university classroom, there is little interaction . . . little or no questioning . . . between teachers and students; teachers are shown respect and deference but the exchange of ideas is nil. In contrast to the Thai, there is considerable political discussion among the Chinese in coffee houses, according to my Chinese informant.

Daeng does, however, indicate interest in politics or matters that have political overtones. With an old friend and former teacher, his wife, and American friends, he discusses Southeast Asian affairs, local Bangkok politics, taxes, and how Bangkok should be improved.

Daeng, an avid newspaper reader and radio listener, listens daily to VOA and BBC and subscribes to the *Bangkok World* and the *Japan Times,* English language newspapers, and to three Thai language newspapers as well. The English language newspapers are his textbooks for his English classes; Daeng does not read or use textbooks in his classes because "I am much too busy to read them."

Unlike the assumption that we in the West usually make about the teacher as a key person in the dissemination of information, Thai teachers do not fulfill such a function. Of course, in the classroom, the use of newspaper material does mean that Daeng is transmitting news or information to his class members. Outside of the classroom, however, he is generally hesitant to pass on information that he has heard from others unless he is sure of the source's dependability and reliability. Again, my American informant, in speaking about Thai teachers in the public school

[19] Benedict, 1943, p. 45.

[20] Embree, 1950, p. 187.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

system or in the university, states that they only interact within their own circle and do not communicate news or information outside of their professional group.

Attitudes About Religion

Buddhism is Daeng's professed religion. Although ordainment as a Buddhist monk is quite high in Northeast Thailand, Daeng's native area, he did not spend any time either as a novice or as a monk[21] (such service is ideally expected of all Thai males). On his first trip to Bangkok, Daeng utilized for about a year the wat as a place of refuge, as a shelter and source of food. My American informant stated that this is a usual practice for poor students in Bangkok. Daeng's words about Buddhism are critical although it is argued that such criticism does not detract from a Thai's identification with his religion: "Thai people are born Buddhists but they do not understand the (preachments of the) monks who speak in Pali and Sanskrit. The sitting position in the temple (required to show respect to Buddha and to the monks) is so tiring that people don't pay attention to or understand what is being said. The monks (are aware of this and) are now holding discussions in meeting halls where Buddhism is explained (and where parallels between Buddhism and Christianity are indicated). In such meetings the (traditional) sitting position is not required."

Daeng reported considerable contact with Christian missionaries in Bangkok and upcountry. He had close associations with them over the years, helped them with their sermons, and sang in their street choirs. Apparently, these experiences made little impact on Daeng's professed but inactive Buddhism.[22]

Attitudes About Work

Generally, students of Thai culture will agree with Embree's conclusions about the Thai and their attitudes and commitment to work—work is not regarded as a good thing in itself but a good

[21] For all of Thailand, about 30% of the males enter the monkhood. In the Northeast, about 75% become ordained monks but do not remain in monkhood (Textor, 1961, p. 44).

[22] Graham reports less attendance at wats, less observance of religious holidays and substantial decrease in number of men who become monks (Graham, 1961, p. 25).

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

deal of time is devoted to things which give enjoyment.[23] However, Daeng does not fit Embree's description since he does work diligently and with regularity in teaching and administering his school. Daeng identifies with contemporary Bangkok and is preparing young Thai and Thai Chinese to take their place in the business world of present-day Bangkok. Interestingly enough, a Chinese informant who has lived in Thailand about 10 years advises his friends to think about their future . . . to study English in order to have a better place in the business world. Now, this Chinese informant cannot take the Thai seriously since he claims that they are lazy and lack ambition. Daeng and my Chinese informant, however, have much in common.

Daeng's 8 years as an employee of Stan-Vac certainly required that he follow a rigid schedule, that he maintain a high level of productivity and that he fit into an organizational structure. Again, Daeng's ability to maintain his Stan-Vac job for eight years —I assume successfully—does not fit Embree's generalization about the Thai lacking administrative regularity and an industrial sense.[24] My American informant makes an observation about Thai university students that is similar to Embree's statement about all Thai: "Thai university students are not hard-working and exhibit no organizational ability or cohesiveness."

While at Stan-Vac, Daeng developed a serious case of ulcers. His physician advised him to avoid being in stress situations and this made Daeng's continued employment with Stan-Vac impossible. Perhaps, Daeng's inability to operate in a stressful situation is related to the Thai valuing of the "cool heart" which Benedict describes as not being anxious and enjoying life at ease.[25] To the Thai, being "warm hearted" is undesirable; it means bearing a grudge or quarreling.

Daeng's recital both agrees with and in some instances contrasts with the usual descriptions of Thai temperament and values. In a fairly recent article, A. G. Pickerell, a journalism professor, visited Thailand and wrote about "the euphoria and good-naturedness" of the Thai, about "their relaxed and easy-going nature, a trait stemming from several factors, including the tranquility of

[23] Embree, 1950, p. 190.
[24] Embree, 1950, p. 187.
[25] Benedict, 1943, pp. 38, 39.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

the Buddhist religion, the mildness of the climate and the fertility of the soil."[26] Unfortunately, Pickerell doesn't mention the harshness of culture change and the buffeting that a man receives when he stands somewhere between two opposing sets of values.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BENEDICT, RUTH
1943—Thai Culture and Behavior. Data Paper No. 4, Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, p. 39.
EMBREE, JOHN F.
1950—Thailand: A Loosely Structured Social System. American Anthropologist, Vol. 52, pp. 181-193.
GRAHAM, HENRY M.
1961—Some Changes in Thai Family Life: A Preliminary Study. Bangkok: Institute of Public Administration, Thamasart University, 1961, p. 25.
HANKS, LUCIEN, JR., and PHILLIPS, HERBERT P.
1961—A Young Thai From the Countryside, *in* Studying Personality Cross-Culturally, Bert Kaplan (ed.), Row, Peterson & Co.
PICKERELL, A. G.
1960—The Press of Thailand: Conditions and Trends. Journalism Quarterly, Winter, 1960, p. 95.
SKINNER, G. W.
1957—Chinese Society in Thailand. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
TEXTOR, ROBERT B.
1961—From Peasant to Pedicab Driver: A Social Study of Northeastern Thai Farmers Who Periodically Migrated to Bangkok and Became Pedicab Drivers. Cultural Report No. 9, Yale University Southeast Asian Studies. New Haven, Conn. p. 21.
THAMAVIT, VIBUL and GOLDEN, ROBERT D.
1954—The Family in Thailand, *in* Marriage and Family Living, Vol. 16, pp. 381-89.

[26] Pickerell, 1960, p. 95.

This content downloaded from 132.239.1.230 on Fri, 13 Nov 2015 00:41:21 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions